



MAILING LABELS FOR INFECTIOUS SPECIMENS

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## New Members of the PHR Board of Editors



Dr. Domke



Dr. Dyar



Mr. Gilbertson



Dr. Shaw

The Board of Editors of *Public Health Reports* has gained four new members, who will serve for 3 years. Retiring from the board are Dr. Harold D. Chope, J. Stewart Hunter, Dr. Alexander Langmuir, and Dr. Wilson T. Sowder.

**Herbert R. Domke, M.D., Dr.P.H.**, has been director of the Allegheny County Health Department and adjunct associate professor in the Graduate School of Public Health, University of Pittsburgh, since January 1959. He was health commissioner of the St. Louis County Health Department for the previous decade, during which he also served as assistant professor of preventive medicine and public health at Washington University. In the period 1944-47, he was chief medical officer of the Chicago Health Department.

Dr. Domke obtained a doctorate in public health in 1959 from the Harvard School of Public Health, writing his thesis on "Social Class and the Childhood Diseases."

His published papers have been in the areas of public health administration in metropolitan areas, nursing home management, and in community mental health research and program development. He is a reserve officer and consultant in the Public Health Service.

**Robert Dyar, M.D., Dr.P.H.**, is chief of the division of research in the California State Department of Public Health. Prior to his appointment to the post in 1959, he had served as chief of the division of preventive medicine since 1945.

A graduate of the University of Minnesota Medical School, Dr. Dyar received his doctorate in public health from the Johns Hopkins University School of Hygiene and Public Health, where he taught in the department of epidemiology for 2 years before joining the staff of the San Joaquin Local Health District in Stockton, Calif., in 1940.

Dr. Dyar is a faculty member of the University of California School of Public Health. He is a diplomate of the American Board of Preventive Medicine and a member of numerous professional organizations including the American Epidemiology Society and the American Public Health Association, in which he is a member of the governing council and chairman of its research policy committee. He is also a member of the Advisory Committee on Epidemiology and Biometry Training of the National Institutes of Health, Public Health Service.

**Wesley E. Gilbertson, B.S.E.E., M.S.P.H.**, is chief of the Division of Engineering Services, Public Health Service, a post he has held since 1959. For the previous 5 years, he was deputy chief of the Division of Sanitary Engineering Services.

Mr. Gilbertson started a career of 25 years in public health and sanitary engineering as a district sanitation supervisor in North Dakota. He also served as State milk control officer. As a commissioned officer in the Public Health Service, during 1942, he helped set up in Atlanta, Ga., the Office of Malaria Control in War Areas, forerunner of the Communicable Disease Center. During World War II, Mr. Gilbertson organized a dengue mosquito control program in Honolulu in the face of an epidemic hazardous to the war effort. After serving as executive officer of the Communicable Disease Center until 1951, he headed the Division of Civilian Health Requirements in the Office of the Surgeon General.

In 1951, Mr. Gilbertson was a delegate to the World Health Assembly and represented the United States at the Congress of Local Authorities in England. For the past 3 years, he has been on the Sanitary Engineering Advisory Panel of the International Cooperation Administration.

A fellow of the American Public Health Association and member of the section council of the engineering and sanitation section of that organization, he has served, since 1959, as chairman of the engineers in government practice section of the National Society of Professional Engineers.

**James R. Shaw, M.D.**, has been chief of the Division of Indian Health, Public Health Service, since 1955. Detailed by the Service in 1953 to the Department of the Interior, he served 2 years as chief of the Branch of Health in the Bureau of Indian Affairs. During the previous year, he was chief of the Service's Division of Hospitals.

A member of the Public Health Service commissioned corps since 1938, Dr. Shaw served in hospitals of the Service and in the U.S. Coast Guard. He became officer-in-charge of the Detroit hospital in 1949.

After receiving his medical degree from the University of Michigan Medical School in 1936, Dr. Shaw followed postgraduate work at the Mayo Clinic. He is a fellow of the American College of Physicians and member of Alpha Omega Alpha, the American Medical Association, the American Public Health Association, and the Association of Military Surgeons.

# ECHOES from Public Health Reports

## REPORT UPON THE MICRO-ORGANISMS IN SCRAPINGS FROM THE NAILS OF SURGICAL NURSES.

HYGIENIC LABORATORY, U. S. MARINE HOSPITAL,  
New York, November 18, 1889.

SIR: In accordance with your request of June 23, I have the honor to state that I have carried on a line of experimentation to determine the micro-organisms in the nail-dirt from the nurses of the surgical wards of this hospital.

Many observers have spoken of the danger of wound infection from this source: some have asserted that it was an impossibility to thoroughly cleanse the hands, more especially the nails, of operators and assistants.

Many plans have been devised, some of which are too tedious for application, to insure the perfect cleanliness of hands. Granting that this is accomplished on the part of the operator it does not, from our observation, apply to the surgical nurses and attendants of an operating-room.

In this investigation attention was chiefly directed to the hands of the surgical nurses and those having charge of or making surgical dressings. Observations were made from time to time, extending over a period of three months, the clientele of the wards constantly changing, so that a patient designated as a source of infection would not apply to the whole series.

The nurses had been, we believe, instructed to use the nail-brush and other agents for cleansing their hands. The usual method was as follows: Scrub the hands with soap and warm water to be followed by immersion in bichloride solution (1 to 3,000), the usual ward mixture for the surgical wards.

The examinations were so timed as to take the nurses when they were making or assisting in dressings, or just before an operation. In all the examinations only in two instances were the hands found to be sterile; in all the others bacteria were found.

To make the matter as clear as possible, we prefer to give the observations in detail and allow their results to speak for themselves.

NOVEMBER 22, 1889, pp. 393-398

Assistant Surgeon Joseph James Kinyoun, whose facilities for bacteriological analysis were in the one-room laboratory he established in the Marine Hospital, Staten Island, N.Y., reported on 26 examinations of nail parings from surgical nurses. Pus organisms were found in 16, *Staphylococcus pyogenes albus* in 10, *Streptococcus pyogenes* in 4, and *Staphylococcus pyogenes aureus* in 2. He concluded that, even with careful washing, "the hands of the nurse play a greater role as an infectious agent than is supposed."